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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Defendants reach plea agreement in Yuma County drug trafficking case**

(Yuma, Ariz. – March 12, 2004) Attorney General Terry Goddard announced today three defendants responsible for the trafficking of thousands of pounds of marijuana through Yuma County pled guilty this week to possessing and/or transporting marijuana for sale. Two of the three also pled to one count of conspiracy. This case was scheduled to go to trial over the next four to five weeks, and was expected to be one of the longest drug trials in Yuma County history.

Defendants Refugio Manuel Saldana-Camacho, Refugio Manuel Saldana, Jr., and Jennifer Szwec will be sentenced on April 21.

Investigators allege that these defendants comprised one organization within a larger drug trafficking organization responsible for the movement of thousands of pounds of marijuana per month through stash houses in Yuma. The investigators also contend that the larger organization also is responsible for the sale of marijuana, methamphetamine, ecstasy and cocaine within the Yuma area.

Yuma County Judge John Nelson could sentence under the terms of the plea agreements, Saldana-Camacho could serve 10-18.5 years in prison, and Szwec could be sentenced four to eight years in prison and supervised probation after serving her prison term. Saldana Jr.'s plea agreement will have him serve 6.5 years, and supervised probation upon his release from prison.

This case was the result of a joint investigation by the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Drug Enforcement Administration and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, which worked with the Arizona Attorney General's Office to conduct a wiretap and other surveillance on a large drug organization involved in smuggling marijuana to and from Yuma. Over a four-month period, law enforcement intercepted thousands of telephone calls through Yuma to California and other places. Assistant Attorney General Billie Rosen is assigned to this case.

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